



Town of Tyngsborough

Mandatory Recycling Case Study

MassDEP Municipal Waste Reduction Toolkit



Town Statistics:

Population: 11,081

Households: 4,000

Median Income: \$69,818

Overview/Introduction: The Town of Tyngsborough voted to implement a Mandatory Recycling By-Law at its special town meeting on October 11, 2005. The town received an FY06 technical assistance grant from MassDEP to educate residents about, and assure town-wide compliance with, the Mandatory Recycling By-Law through an outreach campaign. The Town had charged the Tyngsborough Recycling Committee with developing this campaign. The town also hired an intern for 6 months to conduct enforcement activities for the Mandatory Recycling By-law.

The goal of the grant was to reduce the amount of recyclables going into the trash, thereby saving the town disposal costs and increase revenue through the paper recycling.

History and Outreach:

- Recycling committee developed an outreach plan to community regarding Mandatory Recycling By-law;
- Recycling committee met with BFI to review outreach plan and hauler guidance;
- Developed a cable television campaign to inform residents about the new by-law and the Town's recycling progress;
- Purchased banners and sandwich boards to place around the Town informing residents of the new by-law.
- Developed a laminated quick reference for recycling information that was mailed to all residents;
- Developed information for town's existing website to provide information to residents on where they can bring their unwanted items for recycling or reuse.

Enforcement Implementation:

- Town hired an intern to coordinate with the Town's trash and recycling hauler to enforce by-law. The intern worked for 6 months.
- The intern traveled the streets during trash day and noted the households who did not comply with the mandatory recycling policy. The intern also noted that the hauler was failing to sticker banned items.
- Those households found to be out of compliance with bylaw received friendly reminder postcards noting lack of recycling out on trash day. 878 households received friendly reminder postcards as the first warning.
- If households are found to out of compliance a second time, they received a personalized letter.

Results:

- The intern has found many residents not following the mandatory recycling policy, as well as the hauler not leaving waste or stickers. But by her presence, notations and of course digital pictures the hauler began taking more notice and households changed their recycling habits.
- Of the 95 letters mailed in early May 2006, 72 households started recycling.
- Approximately 753 residents started recycling after receiving either the postcard or the letter. This is over 85% success rate with the program.
- *From the Recycling Committee Chair:*
"The grant provided us with a much-needed opportunity to be able to actually monitor what was really happening in town. The intern brought to light issues with the waste company and provided us with an opportunity to educate residents. My perspective is that the majority of residents are trying, though probably not recycling enough of their waste – which is why our percentage isn't higher. Those who aren't recycling after receiving the letter simply aren't going to comply (in my opinion) without the by-law being amended to include a penalty phase..."
- *From the Intern:*
"I have seen a difference between rentals and homeowner, the friendly reminders had less of an impact on renters than did the homeowners. After 6 week's some sections of town started to change. After 11 week's, I have been noting drastic changes from the residents and from our hauler..."